

9 February 2015

Dear President Juncker,

The Young Academies of Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Poland and Scotland have taken note of the Commission's recently unveiled proposal to create a European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) by reallocating funds committed to the Horizon 2020 program. We are deeply concerned by the consequences of such cuts to the Union's science budget.

The intended goal of the EFSI is important. We agree that new strategic, long-term initiatives are necessary to address the current financial crisis. Dismantling science is, however, not the way to accomplish this. On the contrary, cuts to the research budget instead strike at the very core of European integration and undermines long-term economic progress. The commitment to science manifested in the several generations of framework programs as in the current Horizon 2020 program has clearly illustrated the benefits of the European Union. Science promotes European integration in two important ways: First, by the very *process* of scientific collaboration bridges are built between countries, prompting investigators of different nationalities to work together towards a common goal using the international language of science. Second, the *results* generated by research contribute crucially to a better understanding of ourselves, and the world around us, in a way that is inherently transnational. History shows that these insights translate into socioeconomic progress that benefits the entire European Union.

We are particularly troubled to learn that substantial cuts are proposed to the budget of the European Research Council (ERC). As the ERC provides long-term funding of research of the highest international standards, it is crucial for maintaining Europe's position in the international competition for talented investigators. Further, the use of a quality-focused review process has contributed to harmonized standards of research excellence across the Union. As young scientists, we can testify to its particular importance in supporting Europe's foremost junior investigators, which accounts for almost two thirds of the ERCs budget. We are also greatly concerned about the plans to cut funding for the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions. This important mobility program enables young European scientists to advance their skills and expertise by funding their training abroad, and helps to bring talented junior investigators from around the world to our continent. Its importance for building the European knowledge-base for a more prosperous future cannot be overstated.



SVERIGES UNGA AKADEMI

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We are convinced that you share our vision of a Europe that enables and thrives on new insights, ideas and innovations. The Commission possesses an established, powerful tool to reach this goal via its commitment to an ambitious and internationally competitive research funding program. We respectfully ask that you reconsider these proposed cuts in the Horizon 2020 budget as we fear that these will have detrimental effects not only on the progress of science, but also on the long-term economic development of the Union.

Sincerely,

Young Academy of Sweden

Young Academy of Belgium

Young Academy of Denmark

Center of Young Scientists of the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts

Young Academy of the Netherlands

The Polish Young Academy

Young Academy of Scotland